Dear Jim,

3/25/80

We were glad to get your 3/20 because of the good news in it. I'd hope you'd find the copy of the annal I sent of some interest but that it found so much use is really great.

There is one phrase that caught my attention. While I am aware of the possibility that a skilled writer could subconsciously use an effective phrase for its effectiveness, I want to be certain that it is not a reflection of what is in your mind. You say that being able to help these widows "enables me to feel that I'm not altogether useless." While I can't visualize a situation in which you could be, it ~~must~~ ought not be any reflection of any kind of evaluation of what you are doing.

If it does and should hold its own rewards and thus has turned out not to be entirely selfish, what you are now doing gets to the most basic ~~concepts~~ of Judeo-Christian concepts of what we are all in this world for. It can't be praised or respected too much, it is that worthwhile.

I think you are very fortunate to have found the opportunity and that it is a blessing for these widows. It works both ways, which again is the way things should be.

You'd mentioned one in particular before but not in any way that enabled me to make any identification of her. I now take it that this woman is the former Treasurer of the U.S.

If you "sort of oscillate from one kitchen to the other" ~~kk~~ there is also the suggestion of some companionship in this and that also should be very good for both of you.

Particularly because while JFK, like other politicians, appointed his share of dumdums, I don't think he would have with a woman and I therefore believe that you may have common intellectual and other interests. Hope so.

Going back to China sounds like a real adventure. Gary Schoener has repeated how impressed he has been after several trips with peers. But Elizabeth will revel in what you'll be able to report. (We are aware of her stamp interest and probably send what she doesn't want to be sure we overlook nothing. I like her standard is it pretty?)

Mike Maio's son by his first marriage is here, likes it but is lonely. Today's chores include drafting a letter Mike will translate into Chinese so the son (yet to be names in our names) can translate it into Chinese for the son to send to the girl frien he wants to marry, inviting her here for a trip. They want it in Englosh so they can send the English version along to be shown to the American consul to get a visa if the passport is granted.

Spring is neigh here, despite nights as low as 20 and regularly below freezing. Two days of high winds wrecked the crocuses, which had been beautiful. Last night Jill told me that a narcisus is beginning to show clor, so soon hundreds of them will, all over the place. Reminds me of how much work I have to do to ~~make~~ clean up before the grass grows. (It is greening up.) All the brush not piled for animal nests to be chopped into mulch, all the branches to be made into kindling and much of next winter's firewood to be stacked for drying as well as neatness. I've already made 15 stacks six feet high and have several to go before the ground is hard enough for me to haul more of it up. I've laid in close to half of next winter's heat and hope to get a bit more down and drying. Much of this winter's heat came from wood that was too green and thus ~~wasx~~ wasted much of its energy in drying itself enough to burn. I can't keep at these things too long but little by little they do get done. Lil is looking forward to getting flower beds in order, with some fear of the limitations of her arthritis. I've made her several large beds near the house and we are trying to move what we can into them, where they'll be easier to tend. Our best,